

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) ~~The backlight unit according to claim 1,~~ A backlight unit comprising:

an optical diffusion plate;

a pair of lamp holders;

~~wherein said at least one lamp includes a plurality of elongate lamps extending parallel to one another, said plural lamps being supported by said pair of lamp holders and being disposed at a rear side of said optical diffusion plate; and~~

~~said optical member is an optical rod member for reflecting a light component of light emitted by one of said plural lamps substantially parallel to said optical diffusion plate, toward said optical diffusion plate, said optical rod member extending parallel to said elongate lamps and being interposed between an adjacent two of said elongate lamps, said optical rod member being supported by said pair of lamp holders.~~

3. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 2, wherein said optical rod member is made of a conductive material.

4. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 2, wherein said optical rod member includes an extension extending from said rod member to abut said optical diffusion plate.

5. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 2, wherein said optical rod member has a scatter-reflection surface for scatter-reflecting the light.

6. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 2, wherein said optical rod member has a mirror surface for reflecting the light.

7. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 2, wherein said optical rod member includes a transparent body and a scatter-reflection material dispersed in said transparent body.

8. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 2, wherein said optical rod member is disposed at a substantially intermediate position between said adjacent two of said elongate lamps.

9. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 2, wherein two of said optical rod member are disposed in respective vicinities of said adjacent two of said elongate lamps.

10. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 2, wherein said optical rod member includes a prism member.

11. (currently amended) The backlight unit according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 2, wherein a pair of optical dispersion sheet are disposed to sandwich therebetween said elongate lamp and said optical member.

12. (currently amended) A backlight unit comprising:
an optical diffusion plate;
at least one elongate lamp disposed at a rear side of said optical diffusion plate; and

~~[[an]]~~ a rod member extending parallel to said elongate ~~elongate~~ lamp and made of a conductive material; and

a pair of lamp holders directly supporting said at least one lamp and said rod member.

13. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 12, wherein said rod member is electrically grounded.

14. (currently amended) The backlight unit according to claim 12, wherein said rod member is electrically connected to one of terminals of said ~~elongate~~ elongate lamp.

15. (original) The backlight unit according to claim 12, wherein a pair of said optical dispersion sheets sandwich

therebetween said elongate lamp and said rod member.

16. (currently amended) A liquid crystal display device comprising:

the backlight unit according to claim 1; and
a liquid crystal panel adjacent said backlight unit.

17. (currently amended) A liquid crystal display device comprising:

the backlight unit according to claim 12; and
a liquid crystal panel adjacent said backlight unit.

18. (new) The backlight unit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plural lamps and said optical rod member are structured and arranged so that a single plane that is parallel to a longitudinal axis of said plural lamps bisects each of said plural lamps and said optical rod member into respective substantially symmetrical halves.

19. (new) The backlight unit as claimed in claim 12, wherein said at least one lamp and said rod member are structured and arranged so that a single plane that is parallel to a longitudinal axis of said at least one lamp bisects said at least one lamp and said rod member into respective substantially symmetrical halves.

20. (new) A backlight unit, comprising:

an optical diffusion plate;

a pair of lamp holders;

a plurality of elongate lamps extending parallel to one another and being disposed at a rear side of said optical diffusion plate, respective ends of each of said plural lamps being directly supported by said pair of lamp holders; and

an elongate optical member extending parallel to said plural lamps and being interposed between an adjacent two of said plural lamps, said optical member being directly supported by said pair of lamp holders.